Prairie Fire

an independent community newsweekly

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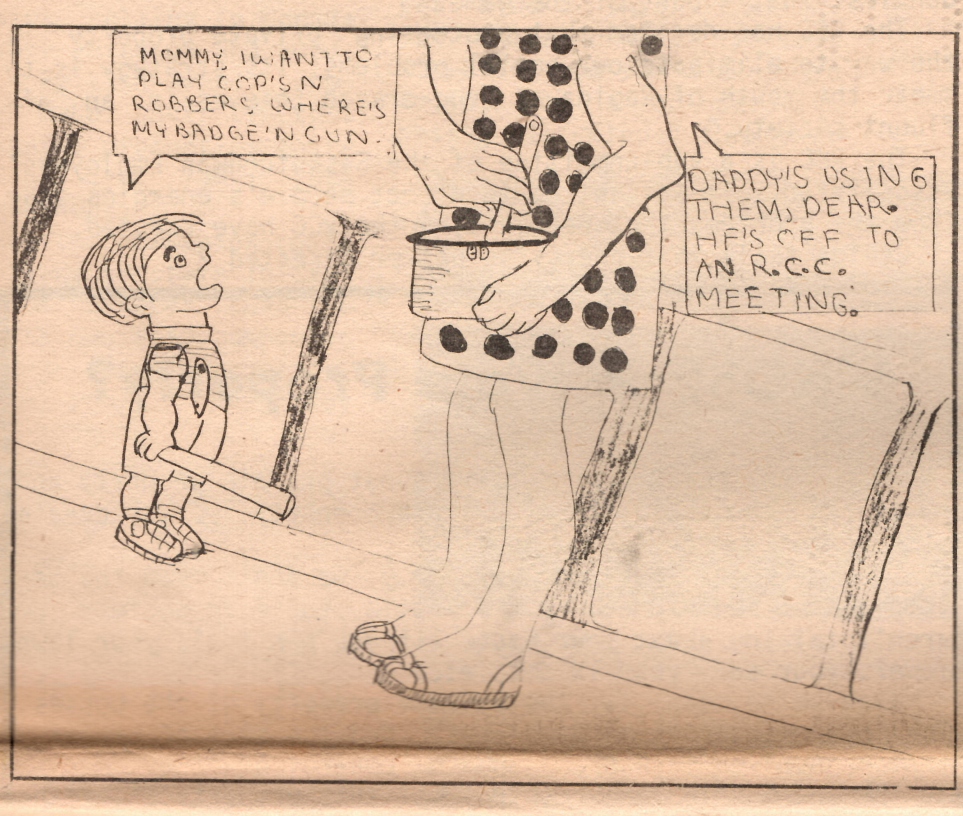
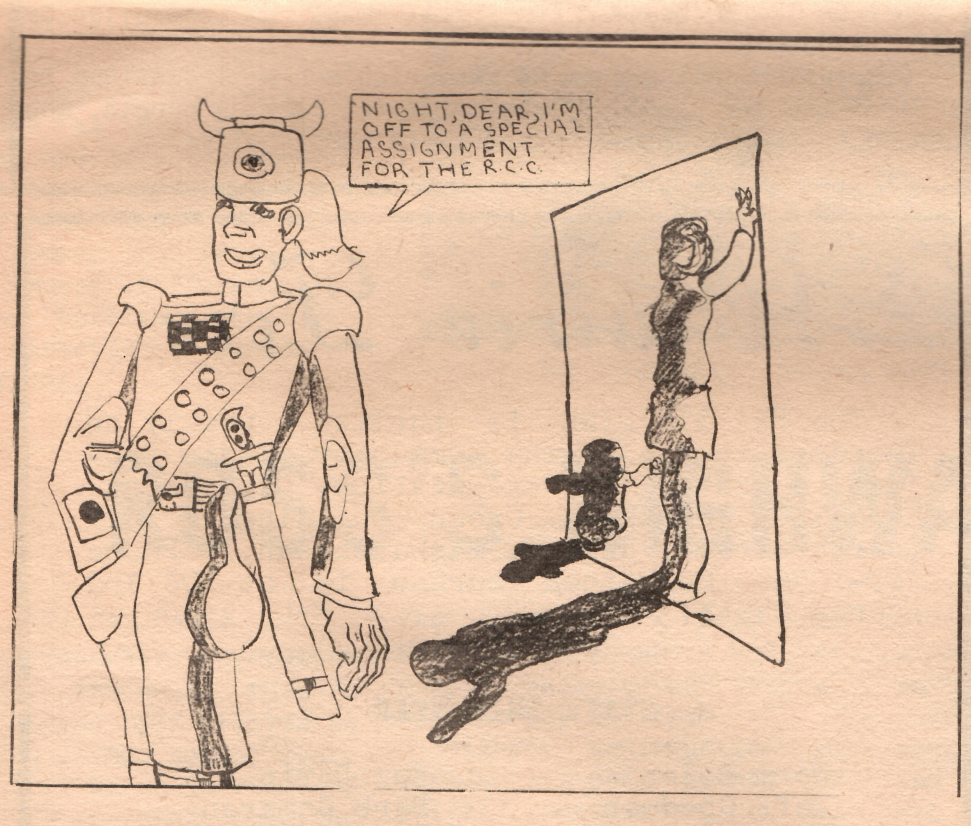
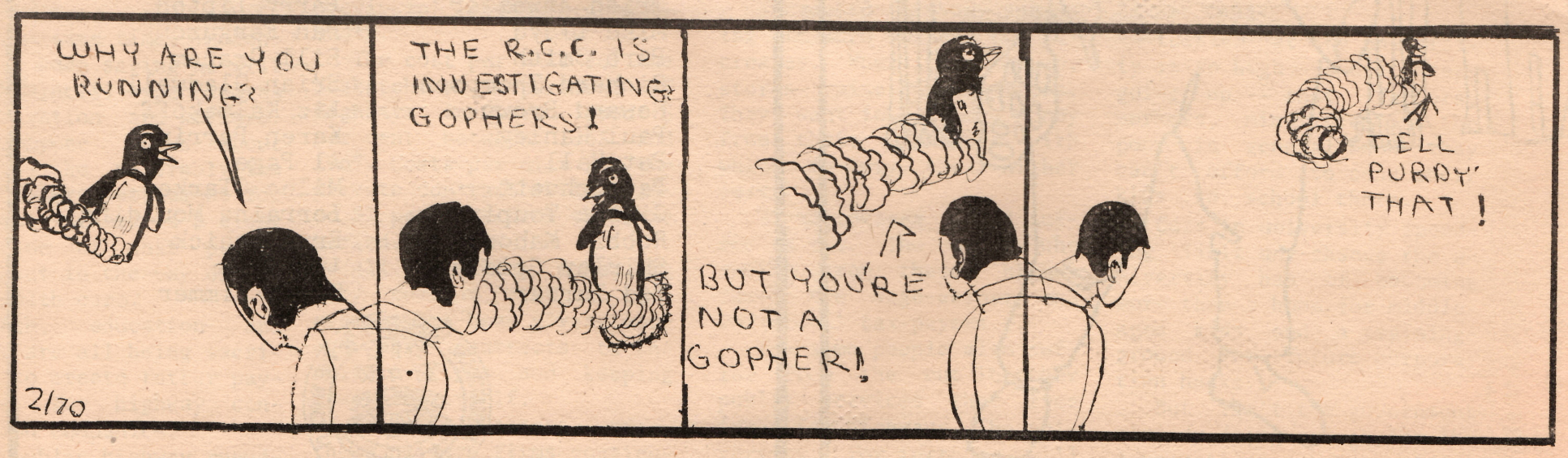
"LAW 'N' ORDER"







PRAIRIE FIRE Cartoonist Dan Ferguson Looks at the Responsible Citizens Committee

EDITORIAL:

The Rich Get Richer And the People Get Poorer

The stories in this week's PRAIRIE FIRE all demonstrate the real nature of the society. They show the big business bosses and their government hired hands for what they really are.

Hospital workers in Saskatchewan have been pushed back into wage slavery by Thatcher's Bill 2. They're bearing the burden of Thatcher's so-called "anti-inflationary" measures, which consist of nothing but cutting wages.

Government spending for health, education and welfare is being cut because cash is supposedly "in short supply". At the same time, Thatcher will increase highway construction giveaways to big companies in the province.

Most of the funds put into roads are drained off as fat profits for the construction companies. Very little of this stays in the province.

The highways are built for the mining, oil and pulp bosses. But the money to build them comes from higher taxes for those of us in the lower and middle-class income brackets.

In a third story, we see how the international monopoly on farm machinery operates. Farmers lost $15 million in 1968 to these greedy, price-fixing giants.

And the royal commission report on the situation recommends counter-actions that won't change it at all.

Federal and provincial governments place all these controls on the people as "anti-inflationary" steps. But governments make no effort to control the prices of goods or the profits of corporations.

It's higher profits and prices that cause inflation. Governments and businesses then "fight inflation" by creating unemployment and poverty.

Both ways its the people who suffer while the rich get richer. In a society where profit and the bosses' power are God, the people are helpless to fight this plague.

Now, in fact, the rich are escalating their attacks. The Responsible Citizens' Committee will safeguard " law and order" to protect the right-wing, anti-labour organizations that set it up. Of course, the RCC denies its rightist tendancies. That's part of the game.

The RCC has decided that protecting "private property" is the way to eliminate our social problems. Its strategy is to smear the youth of Regina as drug-crazed thieves in an "affluent society."

The RCC is a sub-committee of the Saskatchewan Employers' Association. It was set up to direct people's energies away from the problems that people like the RCC have created.

Couldn't all that energy be better directed ?

WHOSE Private Property?

When the PRAIRIE FIRE talks about private property and advocates the abolition of private property, we may create some confusion for our readers.

When we refer to private property, we don't mean the belongings of individuals -- the little people in society. We aren't talking about your house (if you own one), your lawn mower, your car, your TV set, etc.

What we do mean is the private property of the bosses. The big factories and stores, and the sort of property that's involved in banking and the control of money.

The ownership and control of this property should no longer be in the bosses' hands. It must be controlled by all the people.

Otherwise small groups of very rich men will continue to control the lives and well-being of the working people, who depend on them and their property to remain alive.

Prairie Fire

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INDUSTRIAL WORKERS OF THE WORLD ☆I☆ W☆W GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

U.S. LIFTS CHINA BAN

There has been a lot of talk about the rising "crime" rate in Regina. The Responsible Citizens' Committee has been one response to this talk.

But the RCC is not an independent group of " concerned " citizens. Its a front group -- using the name "concerned" citizens -- of the right wing, anti-labour Saskatchewan Employers' Association.

The SEA and two similar groups -- the Saskatchewan Industrial Relations Association and the Free Citizens' Association -- share the same address with the RCC : 1717 13th Avenue.

All four organizations are run by the same man, Ralph J. Purdy.

The Saskatchewan Employers' Association and the Saskatchewan Industrial Relation Association have identical aims and objectives -- union busting.

They say labour unrest is caused by "irresponsible union leadership disregarding economic factors and guidelines during negotiations ". They are pushing for " open shops " through the so-called Right to Work laws.

The term "right to work" is a lie to conceal the true purpose of these laws. The laws don't guarantee anyone the "right to work".

Instead, they outlaw all arrangements that give unions a safe field for organizing in shops. With " right to work " laws, the bosses can keep unions from making sure all the workers in a place are covered by the union.

"Right to work" laws mean that some employees can be scabs and the union won't be able to discipline them. They mean that some employees can benefit from union settlements without having to pay union dues.

The "Free Citizens' Association" was formed in 1962. Purdy was named executive manager, and Stan Atkinson, another wealthy right winger became director.

The FCA's goal is "To vigorously expose through all available media, the fallacies of socialism and communism."

The "Free Citizens' Association" is comparable in most important ways to the John Birch Society. It used McCarthyite witch-hunting tactics.

The use of anonymous reports to the RCC is also straight out of the McCarthy era. Anyone's reputation could be damaged by having an enemy phone in to the RCC that he was engaged in "suspicious activity".

Purdy has suggested that this kind of anonymous information could be given to employers.

Atkinson and Purdy were also members of the infamous Keep Our Doctors Committee of 1962.

Atkinson, whose address is the same as all of Purdy's outfits, is the real money behind Regina's right wing. He's well-known as an anti-Semite and a John Bircher.

Atkinson distributes hate literature through the Canadian Intelligence Service, a national organization. He's the CIS's Regina man.

Atkinson mailed out the " Trudeau is a Communist" pamphlet for the CIS during the Liberal leadership convention. CIS literature is published by Pat Sullivan of Flesherton, Ontario.

In his role as an anti-Semite, Atkinson distributed the vicious " Protocols of the Elders of Zion" pamphlet after the 7-day Arab-Israeli War.

Atkinson is also one of the so-called " responsible members " of the University Board of Governers.

These men -- Purdy and Atkinson -- are now trying to push their labour policies through the RCC. They want to divide working men from one another.

They're using the guise of " law and order " to get people to rat on each other rather than dealing with the real crimes in society.

When they talk about the need to protect " private property ", they mean the property of the big monopolists and the big businessmen in Regina. They don't consider that the belongings of workers or workers' rights to a decent life part of " private property ".

What they're really out to preserve is not law and order but their own power to exploit people.

RALPH J. PURDY

ROSS SAYS, LET 'EM EAT DIRT!

Our hospital workers were dealt a bitter blow last week in their struggle for a decent wage.

A government Arbitration Board, chaired by Judge Flynn of Moose Jaw, "awarded" an average increase of 4.5 per cent to workers at Victoria Union Hospital in Prince Albert.

This increase is about half what the union originally asked for. It's even less than they were originally offered by the hospital management, and less than the government said they would get!

The Arbitration Board was established after the Thatcher government invoked the anti-strike legislation, Bill 2, to smash the Prince Albert strike early in December.

News of the "award" came especially hard for workers at St. Joseph's hospital in Estevan. The Estevan union had just ended a 12-week strike when workers voted to abide by the Prince Albert settlement.

The Canadian Union of Public Employees, the union which represents Sask. hospital workers, originally went for an 8.4 per cent increase. This is the amount recommended by a unanimous Conciliation Board report in the Estevan case.

The union feels that only an 8.4 per cent increase could boost wages for non-professional hospital above the poverty line. Many hospital workers in the province earn as little as $260 a month, less than they could collect on welfare.

Union spokesmen and members were "angry and disgusted" at the Bill 2 decision.

Gordon Quaale, provincial CUPE representative, said the union had been optimistic about the settlement.

"We didn't expect the chairman to act as a stooge for the government," another spokesman said.

Premier Thatcher has said from the beginning he'd be "very surprised" if a Bill 2 Arbitration Board gave the hospital workers more than 6 per cent. This was the figure he was trying to force on the hospital workers. Evidently, he succeeded.

Judge Flynn's Arbitration Board proceeded in highly irregular fashion. The decision took only two days, yet there were 41 classifications to deal with.

The board didn't even start from management's last offer. It concentrated all its time on tearing down the union brief. Then, at the last minute, the hospital prepared an offer and the board immediately adopted it.

CUPE members and representatives are puzzled and upset that the negotiator they chose--Father Philip J. Loehr--signed the board's report. They wish he had presented a stronger case to the board and not decided to accept such a terrible "offer".

CUPE has decided to show its outrage with the Bill 2 settlement by refusing to pay the union's share of Judge Flynn's expenses.

Ultimately, however, the short-term key to better conditions for hospital workers lies in defeating the Thatcher government's anti-labor policies. All other public employees in Saskatchewan are in the same position.

Defeating these anti-

Continued on Page 6

INFLATION AN

People in Saskatchewan know that we're going into pretty rough times economically.

Jobs are harder to find for everyone, and a lot of people's incomes stay too low for a decent living.

Things the society needs, like housing, transportation and schools, are deteriorating, and they're not being replaced.

Along with all this, prices keep going up. Paying for the necessities keeps getting harder--not to mention all the things advertising tells us we must have.

A lot of people are getting poorer. Meanwhile, the big companies that we buy from are getting richer and richer.

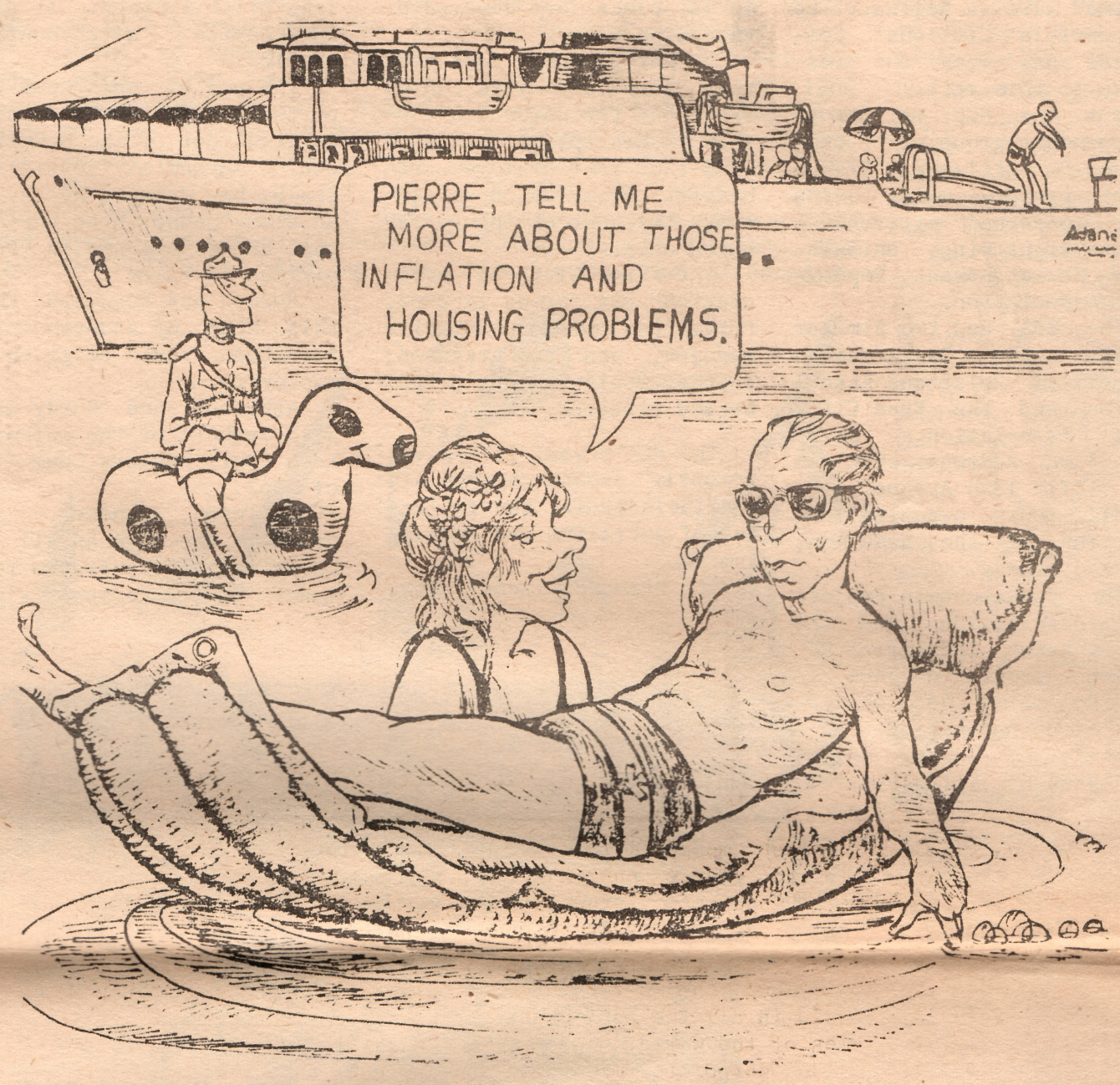
The names for this crisis are recession and inflation. They're words that scare all of us --and for good reason. We know we should do something about them, but no one explains them well enough for people to act effectively.

The reasons that the monopolists, the government and the media give for recession and inflation are clever distortions or lies.

They're designed to justify so-called "anti-inflation measures," which serve nobody except those who get rich off the economic crisis.

And the people who benefit --big corporations-- are the ones who create the crisis and keep it going in the first place.

The government, monopolies and media say the current recession is caused by the failure to sell Saskatchewan products -- mainly wheat -- and the lack of industry in the province.



They blame inflation--everything costing more--mostly on wage increases.

They say very little about what they'll do to stop recession.

They say they will "fight inflation " by cutting back on government spending for public works programs and by keeping wages down.

But these established doctrines are all smokescreens. They don't go to the real causes of recession and inflation.

They certainly don't explain how both conditions are tied together. They don't explain how both are the results of capitalism--control of the economy and the society, through corporations, by people who care only about their own profit.

Nor do they say that business forces government to deal with recession and inflation in ways that benefit only the monopolies.

The real root of the situation is the disregard that big corporations and banks have for the mass of working people in the country. It's really quite simple how they operate and what the consequences are:

1) Corporations and banks keep raising their prices in order to earn more profits. This causes inflation.

2) Those who work for or sell to the corporations get very little of the increased income from higher prices, but they do have to spend more to live.

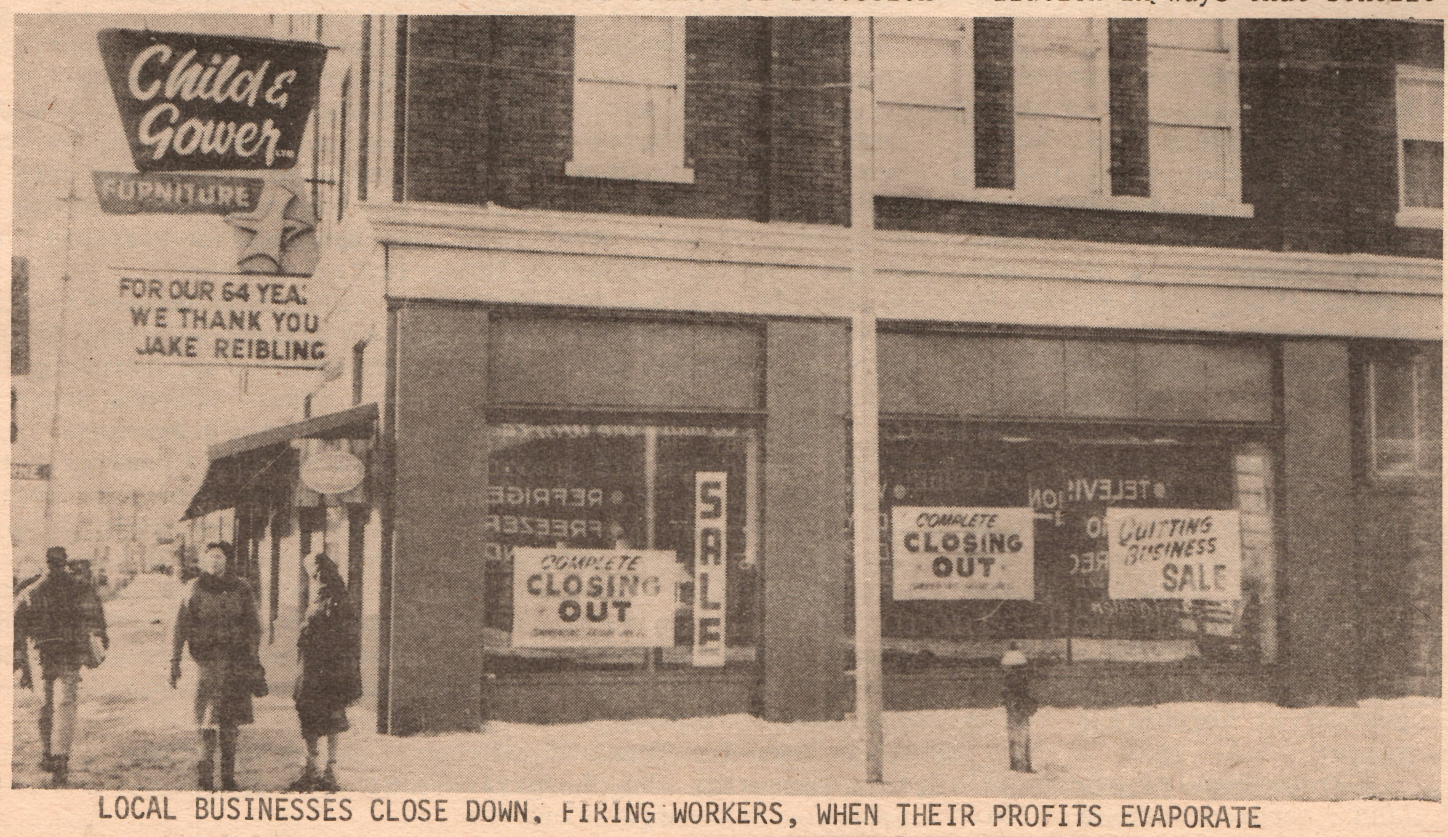
Farmers get a lower and lower part of the income from agriculture.

Workers get a lower and lower part of business incomes.

If people aren't earning enough, they can't buy enough to keep corporations' profits high. When this happens, businesses immediately lay people off and slow down production.

All of this produces recession --unemployment, poverty, less tax money, deterioration of public services, etc.

3) Working people respond to this situation rationally. They demand higher wages and more employment.



LOCAL BUSINESSES CLOSE DOWN, FIRING WORKERS, WHEN THEIR PROFITS EVAPORATE

D RECESSION

by JEFF GOODMAN

But wage hikes threaten
cut into corporations'
rofits, and corporations
n't like to hire more
rkers unless they think
ey've got a sure bet.

So businessmen--and their
rtners in government--
mplain that wage demands
e " inflationary ". They
e anti-labour laws or call
t the police.

If none of this works--if
sinesses are forced to in-
ease wages -- they turn a-
und immediately and raise
eir prices.

The official response to
mands for an end to reces-
on, therefore, is either
4) With more inflation,
e government is again for-
d to act. As always, its
tion is a delibrate at-
ck on working peoples'
cket-books.

Taxes are increased for
dividuals, wages are froz-
or cut, and public spend-
g is trimmed. These are
vernment's so-called " an-
-inflation measures".

Government assumes that
people have less money to
end, businessmen won't be
mpted to raise their pric-
in order to soak this mo-
up.

As far as government is
ncerned, big businesses
e completely justified if
ey do raise prices. Since
sinesses have the power to
this, it is right.

As far as government is
ncerned, workers don't
ve a right to decent in-
mes and prices they can
ford. They don't have this
ght because they don't
ve the power to make it
ick.

Big businesses, not the
rkers, run the government.
en you have that kind of
wer, you can call anything
u want "right".

So government never tries
limit corporate prices or
ofits. It never tries to
op corporations from lay-
g people off.

It never forces corpora-
ons to pay their fair
are of the taxes. It never
creases public spending in
mes of unemployment and
verty.

How does all this apply
the current situation in
skatchewan ?

The question that must be
swered is why " Saskatche-
n has failed to sell e-
ugh of its agricultural
oduct ".

The answer begins with
e handful of big corpora-
ons that have monopolies
transporting, storing and
lling all our wheat.

THE BANKS GET RICH OFF INFLATION. THEIR INTEREST RATES CAUSE INFLATION.

These monopolists are able to charge enough for their " services " that the final price for wheat is too high for the people who would buy the most wheat--people in all the poor countries of the world.

The corporate middlemen make sure that the people whose services are most essential to producing wheat--the farmers--get a low piece of this sale price.

Farmers go bankrupt, the province's whole economy shudders, wheat rots while people starve, and the middlemen get richer.

The same government that cuts public services and tries to hold wage gains to 6 per cent protects these middlemen. It has agreed with the other wheat-growing countries to maintain a minimum international wheat price.

Meanwhi , the banks that repossess farmers' machinery and land are doing all right. In 1969 the combined assets of the seven biggest banks in Canada rose by 16 per cent, and their combined profits rose by 27 per cent.

The increase in profits was as high as 90 per cent just during 1969 for the Bank of Montreal.

We begin to see who the real culprits are.

The Financial Post, for instance, has revealed that dividend payments for Canadian-owned companies reached new highs in 1969.

The average dividend paid was over 8 per cent, and this represents only a fraction of the overall profits. Much is held back for internal growth.

Massey-Ferguson, whose farm machinery is 63 per cent of its sales, reported that profits were up 16 per cent in 1969, to $33 million.

Premier Thatcher has denounced the tax reforms of the federal white paper, especially the proposal to end the three-year tax exemption for new mines and oil wells.

Yet in 1969, dividend payments by "Canada's" mining companies increased by 15 per cent.

If the big monopolies are getting 15-25 per cent more "income" this year, why do working people have to make do with only 5-6 per cent ?

The answer lies in who really has power in our society.

Banks

Fiscal 1969

Bank	Net Profits	% Change 69/68	% Change 68/67
Royal	$ 40,530,128	+ 14.7	+ 16.6
Commerce	38,251,744	+ 16.2	+ 23.9
Montreal	34,251,744	+ 89.7	- 12.8
Nova Scotia	17,726,328	+ 14.1	+ 20.3
Toronto-Dominion	17,269,392	+ 18.3	+ 18.8
Nationale	5,732,235	+ 14.2	+ 8.2
Provinciale	3,253,033	+ 20.6	+ 13.0
Totals	$157,025,490	+ 26.5	+ 13.0

R.C.C. — ANTI-LABOR FRONT

Last month the U.S. government announced that certain companies will be allowed to trade with Communist China.

Until now this has been forbidden for both U.S. corporations and U.S. owned corporations, like many so-called Canadian companies.

Now it appears that these "Canadian" companies, like the potash mines, will be able to sell to the huge Chinese market.

Actually, there will not be such a great upsurge in sales to Communist China. China, like every other country, has to sell enough of the things she produces to pay for the things she buys.

But China doesn't sell enough to Canada to balance what she buys. And the reason is other "Canadian" companies, also controlled by the U.S., have agreed not to buy Chinese products.

Very simply stated the problem is this; in 1968 Canada exported $163 million to China--almost all wheat--but would only buy back $23,000,000. No wonder China can't continue to buy Canadian products for long. She is running out of Canadian money.

China does make and sell many goods, from toothpaste to clothes, that are of very high quality yet priced below American goods. But the big corporations do not want these goods to get on the store shelves to compete with them because that would hurt their profits.

So American control of our economy has three effects that tie together well if you own a big American corporation, but which hurt badly for the rest of us. It prevents China from getting the wheat it could use. It prevents us from making the sales of potash and wheat we need to boost our economy. And by keeping Chinese competition out, it guarantees that there will be a market in Canada for inferior and overpriced American products.

All of which goes to show that things are often different from what they seem.

THE CHINESE PEOPLE ARE PRODUCTIVE AND WELL-ORGANIZED. THEY'D BUY MORE CANADIAN WHEAT IF INTERNATIONAL CORPORATIONS WOULD BUY MORE OF WHAT THE CHINESE PRODUCE

HOSPITALS

Continued from Page 3

labor policies won't be an easy task. A strike against a hospital, no matter how just, is always a sensitive question. Workers earning inadequate wages cannot stay out on strike forever.

Bill 2 gives the provincial cabinet the power to break strikes in the public services, impose arbitration and dictate terms.

It was used before, in 1966, against the Saskatchewan Power workers. Then, too, the union received a lower wage increase--5.5 per cent--under compulsory arbitration than it had previously been offered by the government (6 per cent). Strikes lose their effectiveness as workers' main weapon when government can force workers back to the job and give them less than management originally offered!

The hospital workers need help to overcome these obstacles. They need tax-payers who know that wage demands aren't the cause of inflation.

They need informed citizens in this province who know that we can do without a government that forces wage-earners to accept a lower standard of living in order to protect the profits of its big business backers.

The hospital workers are organizing protests, and demonstrations against the government and Bill 2. They need support from all of us!

• Workers World •

Around the middle of December, the Post Office in Regina hired about 400 people as temporary staff for the Christmas rush.

They were mainly hired as mail sorters and carriers.

I was one of 200 hired as a mail sorter. For 8 hours a day I stood in one place tossing letter after letter into its slot.

(We got two 10-minute breaks and half an hour for lunch -- we weren't paid for that half hour.)

I never realized before how much effort it takes to stand for that long in one place, or how tiring it is to go through such mechanical motions for that long.

After awhile, just the sight of an interesting stamp or a picture postcard would brighten you up.

Occasionally, the supervisors would make their rounds, to see if there was any talking or socializing. If it looked like you were slacking off -- probably because you could no longer stand on your feet -- they'd ask you if you were having any "problems."

The feeling I got while working there was that of a child back in grade school, where everyone lived in fear of being criticized. Only here, it was much more serious.

For as the mail decreased, so did the number of workers. You constantly felt threatened and you had to fight and compete, all to safeguard your position.

For this labour we were paid $1.25 an hour.

By morning, when the job was finished, I was so exhausted I could hardly make it home to bed. But some of the women working there had meals to make, a house to clean, and a family to look after when they got home.

Some even had another job to go to.

Next year the Post Office may be under the coding system.

When this new system begins, people now working at the Post Office will be relieved of their slave-like jobs. But they'll also be relieved of their meagre pay cheques.

Will our "free enterprise" system take care of them?

TRACTOR MONOPOLY

By BRIAN GLADWELL
and MILES CLARKE

Tractor prices in Canada are being maintained at artificially high levels by multinational corporations that control the market.

This was the conclusion of a royal commission on farm machinery that turned in its report last week.

The screw begins with two of the four major tractor companies selling in Canada -- Massey-Ferguson and Ford. These British-owned companies make their tractors in Britain; production costs are 25 per cent lower than in North America.

These two companies could be selling tractors in Canada much cheaper than the two North American companies -- International Harvester, and John Deere. But they don't. Instead, all four companies have gotten together to keep prices high and to keep all direct imports from Britain from reaching Canada.

In 1968, the report said, a dealer could've bought a tractor in Britain for 30 to 45 per cent less than the identical machine would cost in North America.

Canadian farmers could've saved $15 million this way. They could've bought their small and medium-sized tractors at British retail prices and imported them to Canada.

But the companies use their power to stop this. They impose stiff penalties on any British dealers who sell directly to Canada at low prices.

Ford and Massey-Ferguson make "very handsome profits" from this collusion. Massey-Ferguson, for instance, makes most of a tractor in Britain, ships it knocked down to Canada, assembles it here and charges the same high prices as the two U.S. companies.

An effort was made by the Ontario Farmers' Union to get around this situation. The Union bought tractors directly from the dealers in Britain on a co-operative basis. It shipped them over and sold them to farmers for 30 per cent less than Canadian dealers' prices.

The corporations quickly put a stop to this attempt. They just stopped dealing with these British dealers, forcing them to sell at inflated North American prices.

The commission urged the federal government to take "direct action" to cut the excessive profits being made on Canadian tractor sales.

But in a capitalist economy like Canada's, effective government action is unlikely.

The reason is simple; the system is based on the profits of private companies. Governments that depend on those companies won't do anything that threatens big business's profits.

In addition, there is little that Canada can do by herself to control the corporations involved. They're large international corporations, operating in many countries. They can ignore the laws of any one country at will.

THE COMPANIES' TRUCKS MOVE ON THE HIGHWAYS. THE PEOPLE BUY THE HIGHWAYS.

ROSS'S HIGHWAY RACKET

By RAY DAVIE

The Thatcher government recently announced that it would spend $72 million on highways in the coming year. This will be an increase of almost 50 per cent over the 1968 figure.

At the same time, Thatcher has been saying he will cut provincial expenditures on education and welfare. And everyone knows about health -- the miserably low Prince Albert settlement for hospital workers is a clear indication of what people can expect in the way of decent health care.

Health, education and welfare are all being sacrificed to create fatter paycheques for highway construction companies.

And public highway spending is just a giveaway to the big corporations anyway. The corporations need and use the highways, but its mostly Saskatchewan taxpayers who pay for them.

Highway construction in Canada is done either by private contractors or by provincial highway departments.

The cost per mile for the Saskatchewan Department of Highways increased about 6 per cent between 1965 and 1967. Costs per mile for the private contractors increased 51 per cent over the same period.

All of which makes it very curious that the government has been giving more and more contracts to the private firms and keeping fewer for itself.

To make matters worse, these private firms continually spend more money than the government originally estimates they'll need. The amount paid to private highways companies over and above original estimates increased by 65 per cent during 1969 for the eight largest contractors.

Increased highway spending is sure to mean tax increases. When taxes go up, stores raise their prices. They want to get more money from their customers with which to pay their higher taxes.

So businesses don't suffer at all. The people who suffer from these higher taxes are wage-earners and individual tax-payers.

The same people also suffer from the cut in other public services that free funds for highways. The university, for instance, will have to face the fact that the provincial government no longer regards it as a priority.

Since 1964, when Thatcher took power, the provincial government's share of university expenditures has dropped from 46 per cent to 22 per cent.

Tuition at the university is so high --and it keeps going up -- that farmers, workers, minorities and the poor in general know they can't afford to send their kids to school there.

Cuts in university spending limit any chance the university has of becoming more than a home for middle-aged kids and a training-ground for future corporation hacks.

But isn't the government already doing enough for the corporations by building their highways for them ?

Calendar of Events

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 28

Hugo Maliepaard will speak at 8 p.m. in the Public Library Central Story Room on "The Effects of Pollution on Land." The talk will be followed by discussion and coffee. No admission charge.

THROUGH WEDNESDAY, FEB. 4

Jack Wise's "One-Man Exhibition" features Oriental calligraphy and religious art, Western uses of the optical properties of form and colour, and visionary imagery. Public Library Art Gallery.

"Primitive Art" exhibition features a group of African and Oceanic sculpture, weapons and utensils. Also at the Library Art Gallery.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 31

King of Hearts, a superb and penetrating comedy film starring Alan Bates and Genevieve Bujold, will be shown by the For Reel Film Society at Regina Campus. Also short features, including Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge by Robert Enrico (Academy Award for the best documentary of 1964) and Visual Variations on Noguchi, Dwigtania, and Hurry, Hurry, all by Marie Menken. C-1 Auditorium, 8:30 p.m. For information and tickets, call 522-3032.

CHILDREN'S STORIES IN THE LIBRARIES:

Central Library, 10 a.m., filmstrips; 10:30 a.m., "Nazar the Brave" and "The Donkey Bag."

Albert Branch, 10 a.m., films: Carnival at the Zoo, The Thinking Book, and Riot on Ice.

Connaught Branch, 10 a.m. "Fight the Night," "The Miller, His Son and Their Donkey," "Clever Manka," and "Three Sneezes."

Prince of Wales Branch, 10 a.m., "The Tinker and the Ghost," "Gone is Gone," and "Custard the Dragon."

Regent Park Branch, 10 a.m., "The Day the Cow Sneezed" and "The Hungry Goat."

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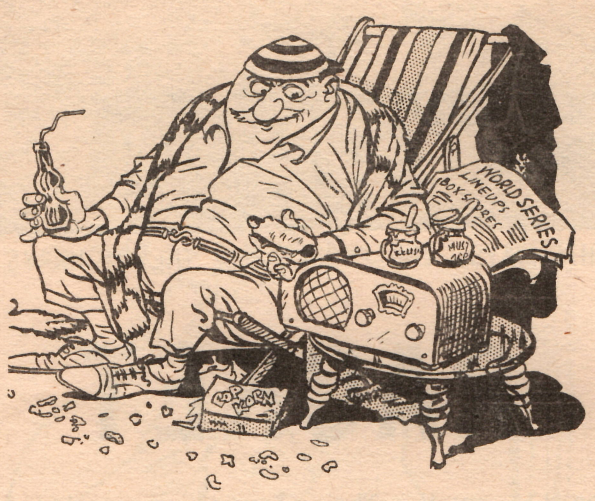
11th Ave. & Broad
11th Ave. & Rose
12th Ave. & Scarth
Medical Arts Bldg.
Simpson's Door

West Bay Door
Brock Hotel
Co-op Dep't. Store
Plains Hotel
Mid-town Centre
(East & West sides)

and at news stands everywhere

Prairie Fire



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LETTERS

As a hospital worker I am very disappointed at the Prince Albert Arbitration Board's decision in our wage dispute.

I had felt that hospital workers were of very much more value to the people of Saskatchewan and to their health. However, this does not appear to be the case.

So I am suggesting to all CUPE local presidents that they get together to make sure that their leaders write a brief on the hospital workers' problems. The brief should be presented to the provincial government, along with a delegation of hospital workers.

We shouldn't just be lying down and dying after this decision. We should be actively taking our case to the public.

I would say it is your health care which is being decided. If you're interested, as I am sure you all must be, then please get out and support your hospital workers for better wages and for better health care.

--A hospital worker in Regina.